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XIX.—*A Visit to the Sinjár Hills in 1838, with some account of the Sect of Yezídís, and of various places in the Mesopotamian Desert, between the Rivers Tigris and Khábúr.* By Frederick Forbes, Esq., M.A., of the Bombay Medical Staff.

IN the end of September, 1838, being at Mósul, on my way from India, I considered that it would be a good opportunity to visit the Sinjár hills, concerning which nothing has hitherto been known with any certainty, travellers having always been deterred from the attempt by the ferocious character of the Yezídís who inhabit them, and who, until last year, kept the whole of the country between Mósul and Nişibín in a constant state of alarm. Their depredations at length became so frequent and extensive, that Háfız, Pásha of Diyár-Bekr, was compelled to attack them, as the only means of preventing a great part of his Páshálik from becoming a desert. He collected a large force of the Nizámí Jedid, and, after an obstinate resistance and considerable loss, succeeded in overcoming them, took possession of all their villages in succession, and made the population tributary to the Sultán, leaving a governor, or musellim, to watch over them, but permitting them to retain their own religion, laws, and customs. The danger of venturing among them being thus much diminished, and the only risk being in crossing the desert, which is here infested by the powerful tribe of 'Anezeh Arabs, I applied to Mohámmad, Páshá of Mósul, for an order or recommendation to the musellim and chiefs of the villages at Sinjár, to afford me an opportunity of visiting the hills and remaining there for a short time. The Páshá (to whom I had a letter from Colonel Taylor, the political resident for Turkish Arabia) promised his assistance; but, after waiting a considerable time at Mósul, he appeared averse to my going there, and put me off from day to day with trifling excuses. At last I sent to one of the principal Sheikhs, or Yezídí priests, at the village of Ba'áshekhah, near the foot of Mount Maqlúb, who having agreed to accompany me to Sinjár on receiving an order from the Páshá to that effect, came to Mósul, and having after some delay procured the necessary permission, we prepared for the journey.

Oct. 12.—Left Mósul* at 3 P.M., and keeping N.W. with the Tigris a mile to the right, over a country pretty extensively cultivated, although the soil was almost hidden by loose stones, approached in 1½ hour the bank of the river, opposite the Muselmán village of Reshídiyah, and soon after passed the village of Shírah, or Sírej Khán, also on the opposite bank, and inhabited by Musellim. At 5 h. 10 m. reached our halting-place,

* Properly, Mauşil.

the wretched village of Ahmeïdât, consisting of about a dozen Arab hovels, situated on a high precipitous bank overhanging the river, in the centre of which there is a large island, and the half-ruined village of Menkúbah, on the opposite or north bank.

Oct. 13.—At 3 h. 30 m. A.M., left Ahmeïdât by a narrow and difficult path in the face of the high bank of the river. The chain of islands here is 3 miles in length, and is formed by a division of the Tigris into two main streams, of which the western is the smallest: these are connected in several places by smaller branches. Passed several copious springs issuing from the bottom of the bank, a few feet only from the water's edge, one of them impregnated with sulphur. At 4 h. 30 m., the road left the river, which here inclines to the northward, and led across a rather flat country, having a range of low hillocks on either side, the distance between them being about 12 miles, the ground undulating, and slightly clothed with dry grass and thorny shrubs. At 7 h. 10 m., passed the deserted and ruined village of Khurbet Lubghî-llah, and at 8 h. 15 m. halted for ten minutes near another deserted village called Dólábíyah, the plain having now become more level and open. In many places the remains of water-courses built of stone run across the road, showing that the plain was formerly cultivated. At noon passed the ruined village of Abú Marrí, near which is a most abundant spring of brackish water forming a small brook, which is, however, soon lost in the reedy hollows. Soon after leaving Abú Marrí, the road joined another from Eskí Mósul, and at 2 h. 40 m. we reached the town of Til A'far.

Til A'far, the only inhabited place in the desert between Mósul and Sinjâr, is a singular looking town, and appears to be of great antiquity. It consists of four divisions of considerable size, situated on as many steep and rugged hills of limestone rock, rising about 200 feet above the plain. The quarter built on the highest of these was at one time surrounded by a wall which is now quite in ruins; from the base of this hill a copious stream of water issues, forming a large rivulet, which runs through the ravine in the middle of the town, but is completely exhausted, in the course of a mile or two, in watering the neighbouring gardens. The water is very hard and bitter, but at its source swarms with fish. It turns several mills, which, though of the rudest construction, are rarely to be met with in this country. The number of houses in Til A'far is about 1000, of which 700 are now inhabited; they are substantially built of stone and mortar, with flat roofs made of clay and chopped straw. The soft limestone rock on which the town stands is so pure and abundant, that they have only to kindle a fire of dung and straw over a spot of ground, and scrape off the crust of quick-lime when it cools. There are a great many covered reservoirs for preserving rain-water, but they seldom can collect more than sufficient

for three months' consumption. There is no bázár or market-place in the town, and only a few shops, such as those of the tobacconist, blacksmith, carpenter, and dyer; the latter is the only Christian inhabitant, all the others being Mohammedans, a mixture of Arabs and Kurds. The language generally spoken is Kurd, but Arabic is also commonly understood. The gardens in the vicinity of the town, which owe their existence to the rivulet above mentioned, are planted with fig, pomegranate, and mulberry trees, and contain a few vegetables, such as parsnips, radishes, beans, and the bámiyah, or *Hibiscus Esculentus*. To the eastward, as far as Abu Marri, the whole plain is annually cultivated in the cold season, although, from the strong and barren appearance of the soil, the fertility cannot be great; the crops raised are wheat, barley, and a trifling quantity of cotton. Til A'far was formerly governed by a Chief or Aghá, chosen from among the inhabitants by themselves, and nominally appointed by the Páshá of Baghdád, but was in reality always quite independent of the Turks, and the resort of all the robbers in the country, who joined both with the Arabs and the Yezídís of Sinjár in plundering caravans. After Háfiz Páshá had subdued Sinjár, he took possession of Til A'far, and it is now governed by a Turkish Zábít (governor), appointed by him, and pays an annual tribute of 150 purses, of 500 Constantinople piastres each, or nearly 745*l*. The chief employment of the inhabitants is agriculture, such as it is; a little coarse cotton and woollen cloth is also made; but since their old trade of robbery has been put a stop to, they have not acquired industrious habits. Til A'far is 12 hours, or 42 miles from Mósul, 6 hours from Eski Mósul, and 35 miles from the Sinjár hills.* About 20 years ago, when a building called the Castle, which was on the highest of the four hills on which the town is built, fell down, there was found among the rubbish a great number of written papers (or dafters,† as they were called in Kurd and Persian), which, from the description given of them, must have been ancient manuscripts; they were in rolls of from 30 to 40 feet in length, and in a character which none of the inhabitants had ever before seen or could understand. They were unfortunately all burnt, or otherwise destroyed at the time, and, notwithstanding the most diligent search, I did not succeed in finding any of them.

While at Til A'far, I was exceedingly desirous of visiting the ruins of Hatra or Al Hadr, which were distant only two days' journey in a southerly direction; but without an escort of Arabs from that neighbourhood, it would have been useless to attempt

* With strong mules, lightly laden, and on the good and level roads of Mesopotamia, the rate of travelling often exceeded 4 miles an hour, and on a long journey the average was fully 3½ miles.

† A list, account, or muster roll, from the Greek *ἀριθμός*.

it, and I distrusted my strength, being reduced to a state of extreme weakness by constant attacks of fever. None of the people of Til A'far would undertake the journey; and even had they done so, it would have been questionable policy to have trusted them, as they are looked upon, even by the worst of the Arabs and Yezídís, as a nest of the most treacherous villains in the country. Mr. Ross, the residency surgeon at Baghdád, has, however, visited Hatra twice (having been seized the first time by the Arabs, but released by some of them who had known him in Baghdád), and carefully examined the whole of the ruins, of which he has many plans and drawings. These, along with a great mass of information respecting parts hitherto unexplored both in Kurdistán and Al Jezírah, the course of the Nahrewán, the situation and extent of the Sidd Nemrúd, or Median Wall, &c., have been probably communicated ere now to the Bombay Geographical Society.

After remaining a day at Til A'far, during which time my companion Sheikh 'Ali was in a constant state of alarm, we contrived to procure a couple of mules, as the Súrujî (muleteer) had the strictest orders from the Páshá not to venture beyond Til A'far with the post-horses which brought us from Mósul. Set out at 4 o'clock on the morning of the 15th, and keeping W. by N. across the plain, passed at 6 h. 30 m. a ruined village called Jub-bárah by the Kurds, and 'Umrah by the Arabs, close to which is a small stream of water, soon lost, like the others, in reedy hollows. At 7 h. 45 m. halted on the bank of a small brook which was formed by a spring close by, and lost after a course of about a mile and a half to the S.E. At 8 again proceeded, the southern extreme of the Sinjár hills being W. $\frac{1}{2}$ N. At 9 h. 15 m. commenced the gentle ascent of a range of low hills which surrounds the base of the higher ones, and soon after passed a pond or tank of brackish water, bordered by gigantic reeds, some of them being upwards of 20 feet in height.

At noon crossed a small rivulet of good water, but of no great length, and began to descend towards the base of the inner and higher hills, passing several marshy ravines covered with reeds: the soil here appeared pretty good but very stony. At 2 P.M. reached some cultivated fields belonging to Bukrah, the nearest Yezídî village in the hills. For a distance of 5 miles from that place are the remains of cultivation all along the path, but very few of the fields appeared to have been lately tilled. The different fields are divided and the road bordered on either side by low stone walls, all the stones gathered from the ground being collected into large heaps. Proceeding along the base of some low hills, at 3 h. 10 m. turned suddenly to the S.W., and perceived the village of Bukrah, situated some distance up the steep face of

the mountain, and surrounded by plantations of fig-trees. After a difficult ascent of 20 m. we reached the village, and were conducted to the house of the chief; crowds of Yezídís surrounding the priest Sheikh 'Alí and kissing his hands with great appearance of respect. The house we were brought to looked particularly neat and clean, and the villagers, although very inquisitive as to the object of my visit, civil and attentive. As every European travelling in the East is supposed, as a matter of course, to be a physician, numerous applications for advice and medicine were soon made. 'Amrú, the chief of the village, was in great tribulation on account of a demand for tribute made on him by the Musellim, who resides at another village about 5 miles distant, and which he protested he was unable to pay. Next day a Kawwás or messenger arrived from Mirzá, Páshá of Márdín, who acts as Vakíl or agent for Háfiz, Páshá of Díyár Bekr, in collecting the tribute. The sum required was only 250 chirkhlís of Baghdád, or about 6*l.* 10*s.*, and this 'Amrú declared he could not give. After an incessant dispute kept up till midnight by the people of the village, who had assembled in the chief's house, and all took part in the discussion, the messenger departed without having obtained the money, and no sooner was he gone than they began to curse and abuse both him and the Páshá without mercy. The village of Bukrah, consisting of 65 houses, or about 500 inhabitants, is pleasantly situated on the north-eastern shoulder of the mountain, near the point of junction of an outer low range of hills with the higher and precipitous inner one. It is built on a very steep declivity, the houses rising in rows above one another. The whole side of the hill, to the very summit, is covered with vineyards and fig-gardens, to the extent of several miles on either side of the village. All the cultivated ground is laid out in flat narrow terraces, supported by low stone walls in order to prevent the scanty soil from being washed away by the rains. Water is procured from wells at the base of the hill about a mile from the village, and near the border of the plain, where there is a considerable tract of wheat and barley. Between these fields and the village a large piece of ground is laid out in threshing-floors, by being well levelled, spread with stiff clay rammed close and hard, and surrounded by low stone walls: the grain is here cleaned from the husk and winnowed.

Oct. 16.—Ascended the mountain above the village by a very steep and winding track, leading between huge masses of rocks and scattered plantations of figs and vines. In 1½ hour reached the summit, which is here about 1600 feet above the plain, and had a very extensive view of the great plain of Mesopotamia with the elevated chain of Mount Masíus on the horizon. From hence the shrine of Sheikh Rúmí, a Yezidí place of pilgrimage, bore

N.W., distant 10 miles in the desert. The fig-gardens and vineyards reach to the very top of the hill; a small variety of fig is produced here, about the size of a gooseberry, of a peculiarly rich and luscious flavour. A large species of thistle, the fennel plant, and a shrubby bay grow in great abundance on the hill.

Oct. 18.—Left Bukrah to visit the villages on the south-eastern part of the hill, being obliged to ride on asses, as not a single horse or mule was to be procured. Set out at 8h. 20m. A.M., by a very bad road, leading through the valley between the outer and inner hills, and lined on either side by fig plantations; the soil being for the most part very thin and scanty, with large blocks of stone projecting from it in every direction. Our course was first E.N.E., having the base of the outer hills $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile to the northward. At 9h. 50m. course S.E., and at 10h. 20m. S., at 11h. S.W., and at 11h. 30m. reached the village of Mírká, after passing through 8 miles of cultivated ground. For the last 3 miles before we reached Mírká the hills consist entirely of argillaceous rock, much of it in a softened and splintered state. In many places in the steep face of the hill, the upper stratum of rock, which is from $1\frac{1}{2}$ foot to 2 feet thick, exactly resembles a gigantic pavement, being rent as if by art, into almost perfect parallelograms, some of them 20 feet in length by 3 or 4 in breadth. Mírká consists of three separate villages, about $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile distant from one another: of these, however, one is completely ruined and deserted, another very small, and the third and largest to the westward only half inhabited; the three together consist of about 150 houses or 1200 persons. The fig-gardens here are not so extensive as at Bukrah; they are a good way to the N.E. of the village and run up in narrow patches to the top of the hill. We halted at the house of the chief, who happened to be absent, but his son, a lad of 13, did the duty of host in having food prepared for us. At 3 P.M. left Mírká, and proceeded due W., by a steep and rugged path, over low hills; at 3h. 15m. passed the small village of Hallejá, containing only ten inhabited houses, built on the steep face of a hill and surrounded by ruins. At 3h. 30m. W.S.W.; at 3h. 50m. passed the ruined village of Tát, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile high up the hill to the right. At 4h. 10m. reached the ruined and deserted village of Teppah. From a small ravine, at the bottom of the rising ground on which it is situated, issue four springs, distant from 10 to 20 paces from each other, and furnishing such an abundant supply of water as to form a considerable stream, named the Sáluk, which runs with a rapid current to the S.W., and waters a large tract of cultivated ground, where they raise crops of wheat, barley, and cotton: after a course of 36 miles it is lost in the desert; the water is very pure and good. Between Hallejá and Teppah the hills rise in very singular crescent-shaped

ranges above one another, the apices pointing to the N.W. At 4h. 20m. course W.N.W. ; at 4h. 30m. the path we followed joined the road from Til A'far to Sinjár, near the ruins of a water-mill ; at 5h. we reached the village of Sinjár, and were conducted to the house of Ḥasan, the chief, who gave us a very hospitable reception.

Sinjár, as it is called by the Arabs, or Singálí by the Kurds and Yezidís, was at one time the largest town or village here, and gives its name to the neighbouring hills. What now remains of it, perhaps 80 houses, is situated on a small hill at the base of the mountain and edge of the desert : it formerly, however, when inhabited by Mohammedans, occupied a much greater space than at present, as is evident from the extensive ruins in the plain below. In a ravine, between the inhabited portion and a mass of ruined houses on another small hill to the westward, are three very copious springs close to one another, forming a stream of some size, which irrigates an extensive space of cultivated ground in the plain, and after a southerly course of 13 or 14 miles is lost in the desert. Over the two largest of the springs, which are only 40 yards from each other, are the remains of a very old arched building, flanked by round towers with a gate in the centre ; the whole strongly resembling the Roman style of architecture. In the plain below the town are the ruins of many Mohammedan buildings, and the tombs of several Sheikhs and holy men. The most remarkable of these is part of a fine minaret of yellow brick, of very beautiful proportions, but only 40 feet of the base now remain. It is of an octagonal form, and under the doorway, which is 20 feet, or half the height of the ruin from the ground, an old Arabic inscription, on large square blocks of brick, forms a band which runs round the building, but so much corroded by time and the action of the weather as to be illegible. The style of the shaft resembles that of the time of the earlier Khalifs. On the top of a small hill, close to the town, is the tomb of a Mohammedan Sittí, or lady of rank, called by the people here Bint 'Alí, or the daughter of Imám 'Alí ; but who this Imám 'Alí was, or when he lived, I could not ascertain : it is of some antiquity, and several parts of the interior are handsomely executed in grey marble, but the inscriptions are very much defaced. When Sinjár was attacked by Ḥáfiz Páshá, a great part of the town was burnt and destroyed, and has not since been rebuilt. There are a considerable number of Mohammedans residing here. We left Sinjár in the forenoon on our return to Bukrah, and reached that village at sunset, having halted for a short time at Mírká. Between Bukrah and Mírká, and about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the former, is a ravine at some distance from the road, high up the hill, in

which are the remains of what is said to have been a Deir, or Christian monastery; but it is now so utterly ruined as to render it impossible to judge what sort of a building it has been.

Oct. 20.—At 4 P.M. left Bukrah, and keeping to the westward, through a continued plantation of fig-trees, passed at 4h. 10m. the village of Nuksí, almost entirely ruined, containing the tombs of two Yezidí Sheikhs and fifteen inhabited houses. At 4h. 30m. passed the village of Yúsufah, of twenty-five houses, and close to it that of Keïchkah, of sixteen houses. At 5h. 10m. reached the village of Gundágaili, in which is the Mezár or tomb of another Yezidí saint, with many ruined and about twenty inhabited houses: 5h. 25m. passed Kushtánah, also consisting of twenty houses, and at 5h. 30m. Háldínah, rather a larger village, with about twenty-five houses. At 5h. 35m. we reached the united villages of Nógri and 'Amr, in the latter of which we halted at the house of the chief, who, we found, had gone on a visit to Sheikh Sufúgh, the head of the powerful Arab tribe of 'Anezeh, who was encamped in the desert about 30 miles off, in the direction of Nisíbin. These united villages contain about ninety houses, or about 700 inhabitants. In the evening we paid a visit to the Turkish Musellim, or Zábîṭ, Táhir Aghá, who resides here with a few Turkish attendants, in order to collect the tribute for Háfiz Páshá. He received me very kindly, and invited me to breakfast with him next day, but expressed himself unable to understand the reason of my coming.

Oct. 21.—Had a visit from the Zábîṭ in the morning, and after breakfasting with him at his house, set out at 12h. 10m. for the village of Kirsí. The path led due W. between the outer and inner hills, through a continued belt of fig-gardens, which ran quite up to the summits of the latter. At 2h. the fig-gardens ended, as did also the outer low range of hills; the plain reaching up to the base of the mountain, which is clothed with dwarf oaks to the top, the tomb of Sheikh Rúmí bearing N., distant 8 miles in the desert, and surrounded by a grove of bay-trees. The hills now became lower, and more rugged and rocky, but thickly covered with shrubs and oaks. At 2h. 30m. another low range or belt of outer hills commenced, and we passed many large ravines opening on the road from the mountain, into which they generally lead in a southerly direction. At 3h. 30m., after having entered a large ravine or pass, leading to the southward, we reached the village of Kirsí, consisting of about thirty houses in two portions, one on each side of the valley, with a small stream of water running between them. We were conducted to the house of the chief, whose name was Muttú, a thievish-looking fellow of forty years of age, who had lost an arm from a wound, and had

his face and body covered with scars, received, according to his own account, in battle with the 'Anezeh Arabs, but which he more probably got when robbing some caravan.

His house consisted merely of an open shed, with a roof of sticks and leaves: he received us, however, kindly enough, and his wife soon brought us a good supper. Although this was the most miserable-looking village in the hills, the people were much less inquisitive than usual, and treated us with great hospitality: they sat up till midnight round a large fire, smoking, and singing a kind of lament for the taking of Sinjár, in which the name of Háfiz Páshá was introduced at the end of every verse. While coming to-day from 'Amr to Kirsí our guides were much alarmed by some parties of 'Anezeh Arabs seen about the skirts of the hills, and we could scarcely prevail on them to proceed. We heard also that the Arabs had plundered a caravan and killed some people on the road between Til A'far and Bukrah the day after we had passed.

Oct. 22.—At 7h. 15m., A.M., left Kirsí to ascend to the source of the stream which runs through the village. After a ride of half an hour along the bank, and up a pretty steep ascent, passing the ruins of two large water-mills, which had been strongly and neatly built of stone, we arrived at a most beautiful spot in the ravine, thickly planted with pomegranate-trees, the stream hidden by large willows, and the hills on each side covered with oaks to their summits. On passing this we entered a thick oak copse reaching down to the banks of the stream, which were bordered by fine willow and poplar trees interlaced with brambles and the wild rose. The path now became so rugged that we were obliged to dismount. At 8h. 45m. we reached the source of the stream, which flows clear and plentiful from an arched channel, in a small level space under a high precipice, on the top of which is situated the village of Kolghá. The surrounding rocks are thickly covered with oak, jujube, and bay trees, and higher up the hill to the southward and westward the oak forest is so thick that the ground cannot be seen. On a large rock near the spring is a sculptured niche, 3 feet in length and 1 broad, with a basin-shaped hollow at the bottom, a few inches in depth, the face of the rock being smoothed on each side to the extent of several feet. The Yezídís know nothing of the origin or use of this niche and basin, and say that it is of a date previous to their time: if the tradition they have here be true, that the hills were formerly inhabited by Christians, (as the ruins of the Deir or monastery near Bukrah seem to prove,) it would appear probable that this had been a place of baptism. Above the spring the ravine opens out into a wide valley between the hills, which is cultivated by the villagers of Kolghá. From the spring we ascended

by a steep and circuitous path to the village, where they forced us to stay and eat: an old woman, a sister of Sheikh 'Alí, who is married to the chief of the place, amused us by pretending to convert acorns into pieces of sugar. Kolghá consists of about fifteen houses: there is a good deal of cultivation about the village, and large flocks of goats, but no fig-gardens. From hence we descended to Kirsí by a shorter and steeper path at some distance from the stream. In the evening I learned from Sheikh 'Alí that the attack on the caravan, in which a brother of Colonel Taylor, the resident at Baghdád, and another English traveller were killed some years ago, was made by a united party of the inhabitants of Bukrah and Til A'far, and that their deaths were entirely owing to their having made resistance and shot one of the Yezidis. Kirsí is a miserable place, with very little cultivation about it: there are some fig-gardens high up the hill, but they raise only a little tobacco about the village, though the soil is pretty good. If the villagers had any industry they might live very comfortably; but, as is often the case, the idlest are placed on one of the best spots. On asking them why they did not make cloth or 'abbás, or tan leather with the oak-bark and acorns, or even build better houses and till their fields, Sheikh 'Alí said, "Do you see that hill opposite the village? Before Háfiz Páshá came here, the whole employment of the people of Kirsí was to sit on the top of it all day, looking out for travellers and caravans, in order to plunder them: now that this is at an end, they have nothing to do."

Oct. 23.—Left Kirsí at 8 A.M., and after passing down the ravine to the northward, kept in a westerly direction along the base of the hill, with a small belt of low hills, from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile broad, to the right. At 8h. 45m. passed the ruined village of Rauzah 'Ashúr, or the garden of 'Ashúr, which, instead of having an appearance befitting its name, is the most barren-looking spot that can be imagined. From hence the high land above Nişibín bore N. by W. across the desert: at 9h. 25m. passed a large ravine leading into the hill in a southerly direction, in which is situated the ruined village of Derijá, and at 9h. 30m. passed the extensive ruins of Khálik, with a scanty stream of water running down the valley below them. The hill is here low, bare, and rocky, sprinkled with a few stunted oaks; the plain is abundantly covered with dry grass, and much frequented by herds of wild boars, which resort from the neighbouring heights to the pools of water in which the brook terminates. At 10h. passed the small ruined village of Tírán or Tírání, the outer hills having now become lower and broader. At 10h. 30m. passed a large ravine leading into the hill; at 11h. the fig-garden and village of Jifrí, containing about 40 houses, and halted $\frac{1}{4}$ of an hour after for

10 minutes at a well in the valley below; at 12h. 40m. we arrived at Samúkhhah, and were conducted to the house of Shummú the chief. From the mouth of the ravine in which Samúkhhah is situated the village and lake of Khátúniyah bore W.N.W., distant about 12 miles. The village of Samúkhhah has nearly the largest population of any in the hills; it consists of 130 houses or about 1000 persons; its fig-gardens extend close to Jifri, a distance of $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and also a great way up the sides of the mountain. There is no spring nor stream near it, but abundance of water is always procurable from wells dug in and near the village. I was asked by many of the people here to write charms for them against danger and sickness, and by the old women for others to ensure the quick and happy marriage of their daughters. The charms which they sometimes procure from some Mohammedan Sheikh or Sayyid, or in fact any one who can write, are scraps of paper containing short sentences in Arabic, and a few titles of God taken from the Korán; these are inclosed in a small silver case, or sewn up in a piece of silk or cloth, and worn round the arm.

Oct. 24.—At 9h. 20m. A.M. left Samúkhhah for Sakíniyah, a village situated on the south-western side of the hills, but instead of making a circuit all round the western end, we kept up the valley of Samúkhhah, at first in an easterly direction, ascending by a very steep path through extensive fig-gardens. At 10h. 15m. course S.S.W. through a thick oak forest; at 10h. 30m. S., and at 10h. 40m. reached the summit of the hill, and began to descend on the other side by so rugged and stony a path as to be almost impassable; the fields of Sakíniyah appearing like a small patch of green on the edge of the plain immediately below us. The whole of the southern aspect of the hill is bare and rocky, and no oaks grow on it; they terminate at the summit, which is here about 1500 feet above the plain, but there are a great many hawthorn and bay-trees scattered in the hollows and ravines. At 12h. 15m. reached the village of Sakíniyah, a miserable-looking place, half in ruins, the huts badly built, most of them being formed of loose stone walls covered by black tents pitched over them, and may contain about 350 inhabitants. There are some small fig-gardens on the heights to the eastward, and a considerable extent of cultivated ground in the plain about a mile from the village, watered by a small brook which issues from a spring at the base of the lower hills. Sakíniyah is 9 hours from Sinjár and 8 from Samúkhhah by the circuitous path around the base of the hill on the W.S.W., part of which is the ruined village of Shillú, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ hour to the W. of Samúkhhah that of Bárah, in the N.W. corner. The small stream which rises near Sakíniyah is lost in the desert after a course of a few miles. Having halted

for two hours, we returned to Samúkhhah, which we reached before sunset.

Oct. 28.—Having visited all the villages and other places worthy of notice in the hills, and procured with difficulty mules to carry us to Nişibín, distant about 80 miles, I paid the priest Sheikh 'Alí for his assistance as my guide the sum agreed on, and left Samúkhhah two hours before daybreak, accompanied by Shummú, the chief, and three men armed with swords and matchlocks; but we had only proceeded about 5 miles when we met a small caravan from Nişibín, the people of which informed Shunnmú that a man in the service of Mirzá Páshá, with whom he was on bad terms, was on the road seizing mules for the use of the troops, and that his would certainly be taken on account of the quarrel between them. On hearing this he turned back, notwithstanding all I could say to the contrary, and we dismounted again at Samúkhhah at 9 o'clock. After some delay and trouble I procured other mules and men, and Sheikh 'Alí having volunteered to accompany me to Nişibín, we again set out at 2 P.M., and having passed some fields under the village, proceeded N.N.W. through a pretty level plain like that between Til A'far and Bukrah, slightly clothed with grass and prickly plants, interspersed with a small blue and white crocus. At 2h. 30m. the hill of 'Abd al 'Azíz, near Róhá, bore W. by N. At 3h. 30m., course N.N.W., the eastern extreme of the Sinjár Hills bearing due E., and the western end W.S.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ W. At 6h. 50m., course N. by E., extremes of the hills S.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ W. and E.S.E. $\frac{1}{2}$ S. At 7h. 20m. passed a deserted 'Anezeh encampment, on the borders of a small hollow containing some shallow pits and wells nearly dry. At 8 halted to feed the cattle, and at 9h. 20m. proceeded N. $\frac{1}{2}$ E. At 10h. 30m. we were alarmed by a large body of Arabs, mounted on camels, crossing the road at full speed a few hundred yards in advance of us, and expected an attack; but they passed on without troubling us, although they had a clear view of our small party in the bright moonlight. The cold was very severe during the night, the thermometer being so low as 39°, with a strong northerly wind. At 11h. 30m. arrived at a piece of marshy ground covered with pools of water. From hence to the banks of a small, sluggish, reedy stream called the Hasáwí, which we reached at 1 A.M. of the 29th, the soil is soft, damp, and strongly impregnated with salt. The Hasáwí runs here to the S.W., but contains very little water; it rises from Mount Masius above 'Aznawár, and runs into the Khábúr. At 2h. 30m. we crossed it where the water was 2 feet deep, and halted on the opposite bank in a bed of reeds to try and get some sleep, which the cold and heavy dew effectually prevented.

Oct. 29.—At 5h. 30m. A.M. got up almost stiff with cold, and proceeded in the same direction as before. At 8h. 30m. came to a tract of marshy ground covered with long reeds and many large pools of water, there having been some heavy showers a few days before. The western extremity of the Sinjár mountains bore S.S.W., and the snow-covered summit of Jebel Júdí, where, according to Mohammedan tradition, the ark of Noah rested, and its remains still exist E.S.E. Báb-el-Márdín (the Gate of Márdín), a remarkable gap or notch in the chain of Mount Masius, behind which is situated the city of Márdín, bore due N. From hence we kept N.N.E. over a marshy plain, and along the E. bank of the Jakhjakhah or Nişibín stream, the ancient Mygdonius, and after passing the small village of Howinah, consisting chiefly of tents, crossed the stream near the village of Hainú, with some difficulty, on account of the depth of sand and mud, though there was but little water, the greater part of it being drawn off for the purpose of irrigation. Over the whole of the plain are scattered numerous conical hills, from 80 to 150 feet in height, which look like artificial mounds; they are regularly placed at distances of about a mile from one another. After crossing the Jakhjakhah we kept N. by W. through cultivated fields to the village of Kōşeir, which we reached at 12h. 25m. and halted. From hence the eastern extreme of the Sinjár mountains bore S.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ S., and the western S. by W. At 4 P.M. left Kōşeir and kept N. by W. across the plain through fields and water-courses, and after passing three small villages entered Nişibín at 6h. 30m., and procured from the Zábít a kónák (lodging) in the house of a respectable Muselmán. No sooner had I discharged the mules and men who had come with me from Samúkhah than they were pressed by the Turks to carry stones and brick for some new buildings. Mírzá Páshá of Márdín, lieutenant of Háfiz Páshá of Diyár Bekr, was here on a tour of inspection.

Scarcely a year ago Nişibín contained only thirty houses, built of sun-dried bricks, and almost deserted on account of the depredations of the Arabs; but, after the attack on Sinjár, a regiment of cavalry and a troop of artillery were permanently stationed here; they number at present 900 men, 500 of whom are lodged in the Kaşr (castle) or palace, a strong and commodious building, and the remainder encamped outside the village. Since this force has been here, and the neighbouring country is secured from the attacks of the Arabs, the place has increased wonderfully, and now contains about a hundred well-built houses, and a dozen shops kept by Christians. The ancient church of St. James, in which there is a fine marble sarcophagus, is converted

into a storehouse for chopped straw, with which it is filled to the roof.

A short sketch may now be given of the appearance, habits, and customs of the *Sinjárlís*, commencing with an account of the general features of the country they inhabit.

The *Sinjár* hills are situated in the Mesopotamian desert between the rivers Tigris, Euphrates, and *Khábúr*, or *Chaboras*; the eastern extremity being about 83 miles from *Móşul*, and the western 70 from *Nişibín*. The character of the desert is much the same both to the E. and W. of the range, being for the most part bare and unproductive, covered with coarse scanty grass and thorny shrubs, or consisting of extensive tracts of barren marshy soil, strongly impregnated with saline matter. To the southward of *Móşul* it is dry and sandy, but improves gradually towards *Márdín*, and that portion of the great plain of Mesopotamia, which lies in the direction of *Kóch Hısár*, equals, if it does not surpass in fertility, the richest soils in the world.

The mountainous district of *Sinjár*, which is in length about 50 and in breadth from 7 to 9 miles, with its narrowest end to the westward, has been variously divided, according to the situation of the different parts. The most general of these divisions is into *Jináí* and *Khovárikí*, as they are termed by the Arabs, or *Jowáná* and *Khórkí*, by the *Yezidís*. *Jináí* comprehends all the villages from *Nógri* and 'Amr to *Teppah* inclusive, or the eastern and half the northern side of the hills. The *Khovárikí* includes the remaining portion of their circumference from *Sinjár* to *Kirsí*. Another very common division is into *Shamálí* or *Gharbí*, and *Kiblí*. By *Shamálí* or *Gharbí* (i. e. the northern or western), is meant that portion of the hills which lies between *Bukrah* and *Bárah*, a deserted village $1\frac{1}{2}$ hour to the W. of *Samúkhah*, containing sixteen of the above-named villages, and by the *Kiblí* (or southern), that portion lying between *Mírká* and *Shillú*, which is 2 hours to the W. of *Sakíníyah*, and comprises nine villages.

In point of fertility and population the southern tract, called *Kiblí*, cannot bear comparison with the northern (*Shamálí*), which, although smallest in extent, contains the greatest number of inhabitants, and by far the largest extent of cultivated ground. From *Mírká* to *Shillú* the soil is dry and rocky, producing scanty crops of figs and grapes, but of a quality superior to what is raised in any other part of the hills; near the course of the *Sinjár* and *Sáluk* streams, however, considerable quantities of wheat, barley, and cotton, are cultivated. From *Bukrah* to 'Amr the fig-crops are chiefly attended to, and occupy entirely the sides of the hills: from 'Amr as far as *Samúkhah*, the oaks in a great measure replace the vine and fig, but only occupy the northern side of the

hill, and do not quite reach its summit. On the southern side not a single oak is to be seen, but many large bay and hawthorn trees are met with. Few of the oak-trees are of any great size: the largest grow in the most elevated positions: they produce great quantities of very large acorns, which afford a plentiful supply of food to the numerous herds of wild-boars which frequent the hills, and whose tracks cover the ground in every direction, the banks of the rivulet, near Kirsí, being completely ploughed up and puddled by them. The fig-trees bear fruit when 4 years old, and if the soil and situation be very good, in 3; they continue productive for 45 or 50 years, and many are seen 70 and 80 years old* still bearing fruit. The figs are all of the white variety, and, although of a small size, are considered finer than those grown in any other part of Al Jezírah or Kurdistán.

The inaccuracy of our maps as to the situation of Sinjár, the lake of Khátúníyah, and the course of the river Hólí,† is very great. That no stream, even a few miles in length, exists between Mósul and the northern or eastern sides of the Sinjár hills is perfectly certain; and the brooks arising from the various springs all run in their brief course towards the N.E., till they are lost in the desert. In advancing from S.E. to N.W. between the Sinjár hills and Karájah Tágh (Mount Masius), the first stream met with is the Hassáwí, which rises near 'Aznawár, and running to the S.W., joins the Jakhjakhah or Mygdonius. The Jakhjakhah rises from the hills behind Nişibín, and falls into the Khábúr above the junction of that river with the Hólí, having previously received the Kókab,‡ which takes its source to the eastward of Márdín. The village and lake of Khátúníyah (which is said to be 2½ hours in length, and 1½ hour broad), are situated about 13 miles W.N.W. of Samúkhah. Rás-al 'Ain, the source of the Khábúr, is 3 hours to the N.E. of the mountain of 'Abd-al-'Azíz,§ near Róhá, or O'rfah, a day's journey from Márdín, and 2 days from the lake of Khátúníyah; from hence the river runs till within 4 hours of Khátúníyah, where it is joined by the united streams of the Jakhjakhah and Kókab, and soon afterwards by the Hólí;|| it then turns to the S., and passes close to the western end of the Sinjár hills, in its course to the Euphrates. Two hours N.W. of Khátúníyah is the source of the Hólí, near a ruined village and mill: it runs a distance of 2 hours to the W.S.W. and falls into the Khábúr.

* A fig-tree, at Christchurch in Oxford, planted by the celebrated Pococke in the latter part of the seventeenth century, was still productive in the year 1807.—F.S.

† Haulí, i.e., variable, changeable; in the plural Hawálí, whence the Al Hualí of Rennell's Map.—F.S.

‡ Properly Kaukab, i.e., Star.—F.S.

§ More correctly Róhá, see Geograph. Nubiens, p. 202, Arab. p. 233.

|| Called Hólí by the Kurds and Yezídís.

There seems to be no doubt that the Yezídís derive their origin and name from Yezíd, the son of Mo'áwíyah, the destroyer of the race of 'Alí; although it is said by some that they are descended from a saint or holy man, named Yezíd, who lived about the same time. I have been unable to discover the meaning or derivation of the word Dásíní or Duwásín, generally used as a common name for all classes of Yezídís. Besides those of Sinjár, or the Sinjárís, there are great numbers of them in Kurdistán and near Mósul, especially in the districts of Júlámerk, 'Amádíyah, Jezirah Ibn Omar, and Zákho; a good many are also found in the N.E. parts of the páshálik of Diyár Bekr. Those who inhabit 'Amádíyah are considered as the most noble, and are called Sheikh-Khánli: their chief is guardian of the tomb of Sheikh 'Adí. The Sinjárís have always been the most powerful tribe, and it is probable that they originally dwelt in Babylonia and Assyria; but being held in detestation by the Persians on account of the destruction of the house of 'Alí by Yezíd, and also detested by the Arabs as worshippers of the devil, they were driven into the strong and isolated hills of Sinjár, and the rugged mountains and defiles of Kurdistán.

The religion of the Yezídís, according to their own account, is a strange mixture of worship of the devil with the doctrine of the Magians, Mohammedans, and Christians; but among the inhabitants of Sinjár, religion, or religious ceremonies of any kind, appear to be merely nominal, and never practised, at least as far as I could see or learn. As reading or writing is quite unknown among them, and in a manner prohibited, their religion is only preserved by tradition, which varies among the different tribes, and affords very incorrect notions as to their creed. Their greatest saint and patron is Sheikh 'Adí, who is supposed to have flourished about 500 years ago, and who is said to have written a sacred book, called 'Aswad,' or 'The Black,' containing their laws and precepts; but as none of their divines can read, and as the book has never been seen by any one, it is probable that they have invented this lie for the honour of their religion; since one cause of the great contempt in which they are held by Mohammedans, is their want of any written law. The first and most important principles of the Yezídís are, to propitiate the devil and secure his favour, and to support and defend themselves by the sword. They reject prayers and fasts, as Sheikh Yezíd has obtained indulgences for them all, even to the end of the world, of which they were positively assured by Sheikh 'Adí. They consider the devil as the chief agent in executing the will of God, and reverence Moses, Christ, and Mohammed, as well as the saints and prophets held in veneration by Christians and Muselmáns; believing that all these were more or less perfect incarnations of Satan.

They adore the sun as symbolical of Jesus Christ. They believe that there is an intermediate state of the soul after death, more or less happy according to the actions of the deceased during life ; and that they will enter heaven at the last day with arms in their hands. They acknowledge as their head, and as the mediator in their quarrels, the guardian of the tomb of Sheikh 'Adí, in the territory of the chief of 'Amadíyah. This Sheikh must be of the race of Yezíd : he receives a portion of all their plunder ; and has, as an assessor or adviser, another called Sheikh Kúchuk, i. e. the little Sheikh who is said to receive the direct revelations of the devil, and, on payment of a sum of money, delivers his oracular counsel to those who consult him, after a pretended sleep, with sometimes a delay of two or three nights : he is held in great estimation, and his orders are strictly followed.

The Yezídís who inhabit Kurdistán and the country to the E. of the Tigris practise various religious observances, of which the following are the most common. On the 10th day of the moon, in the month of August, they hold a meeting at the tomb of Sheikh 'Adí, which lasts a day and a night, and at which all the married women and men assemble. After dark, the lights are extinguished, and they hold promiscuous intercourse till morning. Near Ba'áshekhah, which contains 70 houses of Yezídís, 40 of Mohammedans, and 30 of Christians, is a fountain where they offer sacrifices of sheep and goats, and hold festivals four times a year in honour of the devil. At the village of Sheikh 'Adí is the figure of a peacock in brass, called 'Melik Táús (King Peacock), which is venerated as the emblem or representative of David and Solomon, to whom they offer sacrifices, and of whom there are images near the Melik Táús. The Sinjárlís are not circumcised, but the Yezídís of Kurdistán are said to practise circumcision on the eighth day after birth. The children are baptized when six or seven years old, but no prayers are used on that occasion. They have no fixed time or place for prayer or worship : they occasionally visit the Christian churches and monasteries, and present offerings there on account of recovery from sickness, or escape from danger ; they also kiss the superior's hand.

The teachers or Sheikhs have great influence, and pretend to insure the admission of a soul into heaven by a number of ridiculous ceremonies performed over the corpse. It is first placed on its feet ; they then touch the neck and shoulders, and, with their palm stretched out, strike the right palm of the dead body, saying at the same time, "Ará behesht," i. e., Away to Paradise ! The Sheikhs also pretend to cure the sick by imposition of hands. It is considered a great thing to obtain for a winding-sheet one of the old shirts or dresses of the guardian of 'Adí's Tomb. This, they believe, insures them a good place in the

other world. They give large sums of money for these shirts, or even pieces of them; and the Sheikh sometimes presents one to a particular friend, as the greatest favour he can bestow. The spiritual directors are much respected by all classes of the people, who, when they meet them, kiss their right hand. They are distinguished for the most part by wearing a white turban and a black woollen cloak. The families of the holy men only intermarry with each other.

The Yezídís have, like all other barbarous tribes, many superstitious observances, some of which are peculiar to themselves. From the reverence paid to the Evil Spirit, they do not use in naming him any of the common epithets, as these are all more or less expressive of horror, contempt, or abomination; nor will they suffer them to be used in their presence. This is particularly the case with regard to the word *Sheitán*, and all other words resembling it in sound; as *Shatt*, a river. Instead of using the word *Sheitán*, they designate the devil as *Sheikh Ma'ázen*, *i. e.*, the Exalted Doctor, or Chief; and in place of *Shatt*, they use the common Kurdish word *A'vé* ('Ab), or the Arabic *Má*, signifying water. Speaking of the Euphrates, they term it *A'vé Ma'ázen*, or *Má al Kebír*, *i. e.*, the Great Water, or simply *El Forát*; *Ma'ázen* being a corruption of the Arabic *Mo'azzem*. As the word *La'net* is often applied by Mohammedans to the devil, a common expression of the Persians, on meeting a Yezídí, being *La'net bih Sheitán*, or Curses on the Devil, the Yezídís never use any word which consists of the same letters, as *Na'l*, a Horse-shoe, or *Na'lbend*, a Farrier. It is considered by them a great insult to spit in their presence, or to spit into the fire. They use nearly the same oaths as the Turks, Christians, and Jews indiscriminately; but that which to them is most binding is to swear by the Standard of Yezíd. They used formerly to dress in blue; but it is now considered an unlucky colour, and white only is worn.

The domestic manners of the Yezídís, and their customs in general, are very simple. Both men and women are of middle size, and have a clear complexion, with regular features, and black eyes and hair; their limbs being spare, muscular, and well proportioned. The hair is worn long, and the beard and whiskers kept close shorn; but they are prohibited from cutting or dressing their moustachios. The dress of the men consists of a long white cotton gown, and cotton drawers, a leathern girdle, a camel's-hair skullcap, with a piece of black or checked cotton tied round it, and sandals of raw hide. The women wear a long white cotton gown, with very long wide sleeves, which are thrown back over the shoulders, and tied round the waist: over this is put a strange-looking garment of black woollen, or sometimes of party-coloured

stuff. This covers the back part of the chest, and descends in two long narrow stripes or tails nearly to the ground; two narrow bands also come from behind forwards, and are fastened round the waist like a girdle. A quantity of white cotton cloth is rolled round the head in the shape of a pointed hood, and tied under the chin. The women do not, like the Mohammedans, conceal their faces, but go about their household concerns, and mix with the men as in European countries. This, however, is commonly done throughout Mesopotamia and Asia Minor, except in large cities. The houses of the Sinjárís are generally low, with flat roofs, around the edges of which is piled, in the form of a parapet, their stock of firewood, withered leaves, and branches for heating their ovens. Their houses are very clean and comfortable, but awkwardly built of rough stone and mortar, neatly whitewashed on the inside; and the flat clay roofs are supported by pillars made of fig-trees. The walls of the apartments are full of small recesses like pigeon-holes, of every variety of shape, which are used for storing various small articles, and are at the same time ornamental. The floors are well made of stiff clay, with one or more basin-shaped cavities in them, to be used as hearths. The houses are generally very large, and are what may be called double; they often contain the whole family, from the great-grandfather down to the youngest descendant, with all their wives and children.

The chief articles of food used by all classes of the people are barley-bread, onions, and figs, or grapes, either fresh or dried, according to the season: wheaten bread is very rarely seen. The bread is slightly leavened and baked in ovens shaped like large earthen jars, which are heated by burning in them a quantity of fig-leaves and twigs, dried grass, or any other combustible. Their cakes are slightly wetted on one side, and stuck against the inner surface of the oven till sufficiently toasted. A very good and palatable broth is made of shelled wheat, a small kind of pulse called 'adis,* and the seeds of the sour pomegranate. Wheat coarsely bruised is boiled with butter and spices, and eaten in the same manner as rice: this dish is called burghúl, and is very common throughout Asia Minor and Kurdistán. Dried figs, stewed with rōghan, or clarified butter, and onions, is a very favourite dish; it is also made with oil or sheep's fat. Several kinds of inspissated syrup are made from grapes and figs, and eaten along with bread. This syrup, as well as that made from the date, is called dibs, and with it a tough sweetmeat is made by adding barley-flour, and boiling it up; it is then rolled out quite thin. It is called zinj al faras, or jild al faras, *i. e.*, horse's hide, which it very much resembles in appearance. Animal food is

* Lentils, *Ervum lens.*—F.S.

very little used, owing to the scarcity of it: a camel is killed now and then in a village by one of the inhabitants in his turn, and distributed among the rest. Acorns* are eaten by those who live in the western end of the hills, but only in times of scarcity. Like Jews and Mohammedans they do not eat pork; but they freely eat the blood of sheep, goats, cows, and other animals. Of vegetables they appear to have none but the pumpkin, which they eat stewed with meat. They are passionately fond of tobacco; to obtain which they will part with anything. No kind of wine or spirituous liquor is drunk by them; their only beverage besides pure water being pomegranate-sherbet, and a sweet drink, made by infusing dried figs in boiling water. The men and women eat separately; the latter always in private. The character of the Yezîdîs is rather superior to that of their neighbours of Mesopotamia. They are brave, hospitable, and sober, faithful to their promise, and much attached to their native soil, but at the same time cruel and vindictive, considering their proper means of support to be robbery and theft: and they treat with great ferocity any unfortunate Mohammedans who fall into their power, especially Persians. They differ from the surrounding tribes in not being polygamists: they take only one wife, and generally marry at the age of sixteen or seventeen. All the different tribes of Kurdistan and Sinjâr intermarry with each other.

The Sinjârlîs have never been subject to any one ruler, each village being under the management of an hereditary chief, who derives, however, very little advantage from this circumstance. The amount of tribute exacted by the Turks varies according to the fertility or situation of the villages, and the manner of levying it also differs. The revenue paid by Sinjâr is a tenth part of the whole produce, consisting of cotton, wheat, and barley, or a sum of money of equal value; and besides the village tax, the chiefs must contribute their share annually to defray the expenses of a certain number of swords, shields, matchlocks, mules, asses, and sheep, demanded by the Pâshâ. There is very little trade carried on from Sinjâr: most of it consists in bartering dried figs and raisins, at Môsul or Nisîbîn, for coarse cotton cloths or woollen cloaks, wheat, pulse, and tobacco. Manufactures they have none, if we except the making of a very trifling quantity of the coarsest cotton cloth, and a little soap, for their own use, of sheep's fat and an alkaline ley procured from the ashes of the saline plants of the desert. The money current in Môsul and Baghdâd, and, in fact, money of every kind, passes here for much less than its nominal value. The cherkhlî of Baghdâd is valued at only 2 Turkish *ḡurush* or piastres, instead of $2\frac{1}{2}$; and the Spanish

* Probably the sweet acorns of the *Quercus ballota*, so called by the Spaniards from the Arabic word *Ballût*, an acorn.—F. S.

dollar and old ghází of Constantinople, at 20 piastres each, or 4s. sterling.

In estimating the population of the Sinjár hills, it must be remembered that all the houses are of great size, and that each contains all the members of a family. Taking this into consideration, the average number of persons to a house may, I think, be very safely taken at eight; and I am convinced, from repeated observation, that this is not above the mark. The number of grown men in the village of Buḡrah was stated by several persons at from 140 to 160, while the number of houses is sixty-five. At the rate of eight to a house, this would give 520 as the whole population; and at the rate of three women, children, or young people to every male adult, a total of 560. Taking, then, the average of eight to a house, the total number in the 776 inhabited houses in the hills will be 6208. Although the population of these hills has no doubt been much exaggerated by report—Garzoni, who had good opportunities of getting information, says they could muster at one time 6000 firelocks—still it must have far exceeded the present number, as is evident from the extent of land which has formerly been under cultivation, and from the fact that at least two-thirds of the houses are in ruins, and no less than nine large villages completely deserted.

	h.	m.
From Nišibín to Márdín	10	40
Diyar Békr	18	10
Bákir Ma'den	18	30
Maláṭiyah	29	0
Sivás	39	30
Tókat*	16	50
Amásiyah	18	0
Sámsún	22	0
	<hr/>	
	172	40

Total distance from Nišibín to Sámsún by the road I travelled 172h. 40m., which, at the rate of about 3 miles an hour, would give a distance of 520 miles.

I annex a list of villages in the district of Mōsul, of which the following is a summary:—

Villages inhabited by Mohammedans	131
Yezídís	45
Christians	8
Christians and Mohammedans	10
Christians and Yezídís	1
Christians, Mohammedans and Yezídís	1
Villages ruined and deserted	80
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	269

* The distance from Sivás to Tókat by the usual road is only 11 hours.

Itinerary from Mōsul to Sinjār, and thence to Nisibín.

[All bearings magnetic.]

Mōsul to Aḥmeidat, on W. bank of Tigris, N.W.	7 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles.
Dōla' biyah, N.W. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles . . . W.N.W.	12 $\frac{1}{2}$
Abú Marri W.N.W.	12 $\frac{1}{2}$
Til 'Afar W.N.W.	9
Jubbárah W. by N.	8 $\frac{1}{2}$
Cross a stream flowing S.E. at	4
Rise of outer low hills	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
Cross a small stream at	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
Cultivation commences at	7
Buḡrah—village of 65 houses	5
	<hr/> 80
From Buḡrah rounding shoulder of hill E.N.E.	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
Hallejá S.E. rounding to S., S.W., and W.	6 $\frac{1}{2}$
Tāt W.S.W., $\frac{1}{2}$ m. Teppah	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
Sinjār, W.S.W. $\frac{1}{2}$ m. W.N.W.	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
	<hr/> 14 $\frac{1}{2}$
Buḡrah to Samúkḥah.—Nógrí and 'Amr, passing Nuksí, Yúsufah Keichkah, Gúndagaílí, Kushtanah, and Haldínah W.	5
End of outer low hills	6
Hills begin again	2
Kirsí	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
Kauzah 'Ashúr	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Khálik	4
Jifrí	5
Samúkḥah	5
	<hr/> 33

Samúkḥah to Nisibín.—N.N.W. 5 m.; N. by W. 12 m.; N. by E. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ m.; N. $\frac{1}{2}$; E. 18; crossed the Hasáwí, flowing to S.W.; N. $\frac{1}{2}$; E. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ m.; N.N.E. 12 m.; N. by W. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ m.; Nisibín, N. by W. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ m.——Total 71 miles.

[The statements contained in this instructive paper are strongly corroborated by another traveller, who, as the writer of it justly observes, had no ordinary opportunities of inquiring into the faith and practices of the Yezídís. Father Maurizio Garzoni, whose tract respecting them was printed at Berlin in 1807, with the Abbate Sestini's 'Viaggj e Opuscoli,' and translated into French by the celebrated De Sacy, who added it as an appendix to M. Rousseau's 'Description du Pachalik de Bagdad,' published at Paris in 1809. Very copious extracts from M. Rousseau's work, and the Appendix concerning the Yezídís, are given in Mr. Buckingham's 'Travels in Mesopotamia,' pp. 116-121.—F. S.]